

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

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AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, UK

SUBJECT: WILSON RESTORES LABOR MAJORITY IN COMMONS

REF: (A) LONDON 19233; (B) LONDON 18552

1. PRIME MINISTER HAROLD WILSON, WITH ACQUIESCENCE IF NOT FULLHEARTED COOPERATION OF CONSERVATIVE LEADER MARGARET THATCHER, RESTORED LABOR PARTY'S MAJORITY POSITION IN HOUSE OF CMMONS (REF A) DECEMBER 17 BY NAMING CONSERVATIVE MP (AND FORMER HOME SECRETARY) ROBERT CARR A LIFE PEER. CARR, WHO WAS DROPPED FROM SHADOW CABINET BY MRS. THATCHER, JOINED EIGHT OTHERS ON SHORT, EARLY LIST

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OF LIFE PEERS PUBLISHED YESTERDAY. HIS ELEVATION TO

LORDS WILL NECESSITATE BY-ELECTION WHICH WILL PRESUMABLY BE HELD CONCURRENTLY WITH THAT ELECTING REPLACEMENT FOR RECENTLY DECEASED LABOR MP MAURICE EDELMAN. CONSERVATIVES ENJOY 3,700 VOTE MARGIN IN CARR'S CONSTITUENCY. ALTHOUGH THIS IS REGARDED AS A MARGINAL SEAT (A FOUR PERCENT SWING WOULD GIVE SEAT TO LABOR), MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE IT IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE HANDS.

2. COMMENT: WILSON'S ADROIT MOVE -- WHICH WAS UNEXPECTED BECAUSE IT REQUIRED COOPERATION OF MRS. THATCHER WHO MUST RECOMMEND CONSERVATIVES FOR ELEVATION TO PEERAGE -- RESOLVES THE PROBLEMS ARISING FROM GOVERNMENT'S LOSS OF ITS MAJORITY (REF B AND PREVIOUS). THIS DEVELOPMENT APPEARS TO CONFIRM OUR PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT THAT CONSERVATIVE LEADERSHIP IS NOT PREPARED AT THIS TIME TO PROVOKE FALL OF LABOR GOVERNMENT WITH CONCOMITANT GENERAL ELECTION.

RICHARDSON

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